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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000056

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY)
DEPT ALSO FOR NEA/P (FFINVER), INR/R/MR
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER/ASILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MUSCAT MEDIA REACTION: TSUNAMI, PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS
AND IRAQI COMMITMENT

Covering Tragedy

[1](#)1. The government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an editorial on January 6 entitled "Media Compassion And The Tsunami Crisis":

"We should note the outstanding coverage that the Western media gave to the tsunami crisis. It was more than just a headline. They offered 24-hour coverage of the aftermath of the tsunami. For days, we heard reports about the crisis and received information about how we could provide assistance. Coverage included the addresses and contact information for humanitarian organizations involved in helping victims of the tragedy.... On the other hand, coverage of the catastrophe was superficial in the Arab media. The Arab press sent very few correspondents to cover the crisis as if it had happened on another planet. How can the Arab media expect to compete internationally with CNN and other networks if it focuses on local news, and when a huge event like the tsunami happens it does not know how to report it?"

Electing A Leader

[1](#)2. On January 8, privately owned Arabic daily "Al-Watan" carried an editorial under the title "A Test that is Set to Succeed":

"Palestinians are going through a unique moment in their history.... Through their vote, Palestinians will demonstrate that despite obstacles imposed by Israel, they can elect their leaders in free, direct and democratic elections. This should put to rest Israel's claim that it does not have a true partner for peace."

Supporting Iraq

[1](#)3. The daily newspaper "Oman" published on January 8 an editorial entitled "A Strong Commitment to Iraq":

"The summit of countries neighboring Iraq that was held recently in Jordan was--without exaggeration--a truly significant event because all of Iraq's neighbors participated in it and because each of the nations expressed its strong commitment to rebuilding the country. If the countries keep their word, they will rise above their differences to help establish a stable Iraq. To do this, they must refrain from interfering in Iraq's internal affairs.... The summit was also important because all participants called upon Iraqis to take part in the upcoming election, indicating that none of Iraq's neighbors support postponing them."

BALTIMORE